The Seed Sower.

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The Riddle.

I know not whence I came;
I know not where I go;
Nor why life's mystic flame
Within my breast should glow.
This only thing is clear,
'Mid all the pain and strife,—
Some Power has placed me here,
To make the best of life.

"Not for the gain of one,
But for the good of all:"—
If so Life's race be run
We win, whate'er befall.
And when at close of day
Our feet shall touch the goal,
Enough if He shall say,
"Well done, O faithful soul!"

JESSIE LEETE.

"The world must return some day to the word 'duty,' and be done with the word 'reward.' There are no rewards and plenty of duties." — R. L. STEVENSON.

"A man may live from week to week in the fever of a decent covetousness to which he gives some more specious name, *e.g.*, duty to family, till the heart of religion is eaten out of him."—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

A Missionary Sermon for To-day.

"Break up your fallow ground."
Hosea x. 12.

At no previous time in the history of religion have there been such imperative calls upon the earnest and faithful among us to gird on the armour of our faith and go forth in the name of God to do battle with error and sin. We live in the midst of unparalleled activities. Never before has the sun looked down upon such a scene of prosperous labour, of peaceful triumphs, of material successes as are spread under his renovating beams to-day. The world seems to be in the full swing of multitudinous industry. The hands and the heads of men are in eager requisition. The calls for labour are so urgent and loud that idleness has no excuse, and poverty is almost a crime. The material advancement of late years is positively stupendous. In Great Britain especially, labour has gone onwards with giant strides, making itself more than ever felt as a great power, winning its rights from capital, and commanding for itself a respect unknown in days only yesterday passed away. The way has been opened out for the labouring man to pass into the ranks of the capitalist. To industry and skill nothing is impossible. In all our great centres of

manufacturing life and industry the men of mark for energy, enterprise, skill, and wealth are those who have risen from the ranks of the people, and won their honours by patient labour and untiring perseverance. The realms of trade and commerce have opened out new El Dorados, and men are kindled into an enthusiasm like that which stirred men to search for and open out new worlds, and to win from distant islands and continents the spoils of wealth. No wonder there is an eager restless activity! No wonder the men of to-day, while musing over these things, feel the fire of emulation burning within them! There are golden regions lying all around; the earth gives up from its great deep treasures unknown to past ages; commerce, with its myriad messengers on land and sea, brings the ends of the world together; science lays its discoveries at the feet of enterprise; and education furnishes the power of using all the agencies which lie near at hand. It would be strange indeed if men were not quickened and stimulated by these things. There is no fear of that. They throw aside everything else. Liberal pursuits, nice culture, the pleasures of refined intellectual intercourse, the earnest search after truth—all are passed by as comparatively unimportant. The world, and the things of the world, seize men as with a giant's grip. All their energies are concentrated on their golden enterprises.

In the midst of all this striving after wealth, the interests of religion, though not forgotten, have suffered. The earnestness which characterised former days is gone. Self-renunciation is an old-fashioned and almost forgotten virtue; one or two instances of it occur fitfully, at intervals, in a generation; and men lift up their heads for a moment, open their eyes in amazement, and then dismiss the matter as an unaccountable eccentricity, and plunge into their work again. The religious movements of earlier days seem impossible now. Luther and Wesley together could hardly kindle a sustained enthusiasm for religion.

Why is this? Much of it, nay most of it, is chargeable upon the churches themselves. They have preached a dogmatic religion alien to human experience, denounced the concerns of this world as wicked, set religion and worldly activity at variance, sown enmity between them, unnaturally divorced them, and now they stand with hostile fronts to each other, and can do little either to influence the other for good.

Besides this there has been such unseemly jarring among the churches. Everything is unsettled. Doctrines and rites, proclaimed with Sinaitic thunder, as divinely true by one-half of the church, are repudiated with ridicule and scorn by the other. The very foundations upon which multitudes have built their faith and hope are rudely shaken to pieces, and nothing seems to remain permanent. The active men of the world have looked on now and then, and said, "There are divisions in the religious camp; the churches cannot settle among themselves what is true and good; it is of no use our interfering in the matter; we have enough to do with our own concerns; they may fight out their battles among themselves, and when they are agreed it will be time enough for us to listen to them."

This is one aspect of things. Let us look at another.

In obedience to the requirements of trade and commerce, great populations are being rapidly drawn together. Work has to be done, and men start forth in obedience to the call to do it. We hardly know whence they come. No doubt prosperity stimulates population. Abundance of work and food are the conditions for a large and thriving population. But, meanwhile, the labourer, who has been plodding in the fields and whistling after the plough, the wrecker and the fisherman from the distant coasts, the beggar from the great cities, aroused by rumours of lucrative work, come together and swell the manufacturing populations. The hamlet of yesterday is the busy town of to-day. The rivers have become canals, and their banks are lined with wharves and docks—all the corners of the earth seem to send their poor and outcast to aid in the new movements. Many of these are doubtless ignorant and rude people; they come into a new country, and are stimulated by the activity about them. Some of them work, and spend their earnings in brutish excesses. Their prosperity is a snare to them. Others determine to win wealth for themselves, and so work and save. Some of these bid fair to be the capitalists of to-morrow. And what are they? They have energy, resolution, enterprise, but they are often ignorant, untrained men, without properly restraining influences, and with no inward forces to guide their natures into right tracks. Of almost all these men in the new towns springing up so rapidly it may be said

that they have no religious home. No church ministers to them. They are adrift upon the open sea without rudder or compass. The orthodox churches cannot fittingly minister to them even if they would. The activities of the world, the struggles for wealth, are at present the most real of all realities to these people, and to denounce their efforts as godless industry is to drive them into open hostility. In all these regions there is "fallow ground." The plough has yet made no furrows. No seed has been sown. This is true of whole districts. There is a large uncultivated region all around us and coming up to our very doors. We need not go to distant lands to find the heathen. Crowding about us they live in multitudes. Their plaints come sounding in our ears. Inarticulately they are crying out, "Come over and help us."

Now, I hold that here lies for the Free Churches their opportunity and duty. From these considerations I draw the conclusion that our action is needed, and I feel most deeply that if we fail to respond we shall neglect the very time and tide that would bear us on to prosperity, and shall deserve what we shall get—miserable and complete failure. To-day is ours. Everything concurs to put the opportunity within our grasp, the time we have longed for has come, and our duty begins. But how does it appear from these considerations that we are more fitted to enter upon and break up this "fallow ground" than our brethren of other churches? The answer is not far to seek.

1. We *rejoice* in the commercial activity about us, and believe that labour is a blessing and not a curse. To us there is no hostility between religion and the world. We say that both are from God, and both are divine. Nay, we hold that the greatest religious triumph will be gained when it is made evident that religion and the workshop are essential to one another and when piety will blossom as beautifully in the mine, in the smithy, and in the field, as in the closet and the church. We would not restrain but guide the commercial activity of mankind. "Go on," we say, "do the work which lies before you, and do it heartily and with your might, only do it honourably, justly, and without trickery." The treasures of the world were intended for use, wealth was meant to be toiled for, and its results ought to gladden the eye and to cheer the heart. We encourage the workers, therefore, and bid them God-speed. So far, then, we enlist no prejudice and no hostility against us. Our lusty principles will commend themselves to the lusty workers, and the kinship between them will soon call forth strong and hearty affection.

2. Then, in the next place, we have neither part nor lot in the unseemly disputes of the churches. We look on the sad wrangling with a tear. We would rather that—

> The roses white and red of conflict long,
> And vile religious enmities, be tied
> In beautiful bouquets of fellowship.

To us there are more vital matters than disputes about plenary inspiration and the punishment of the wicked. We want to bring a new inspiration upon the world, to bring the life of God to bear upon the life and the work of man, and to settle the controversy as to the portion of the wicked by working for the removal of wickedness. We have no wrangling and quarrelling about creeds and do not care very much about creeds. We know that of necessity all our truth is but partial and one-sided, and while we love heartily what we have got, and would not part with it at any cost; while we at fitting times must proclaim it, and labour for it, and, if need be, die for it; we nevertheless would not dare to condemn others for not accepting it, nor venture to speak as though our poor human eyes had gazed upon all the truth and all the mystery of God. So, though we go with our ideas of truth to men, we go in a spirit of love and charity, preaching our verities but extending a large love towards them. We seek not to make them sectarians, we hold that to be an unworthy mission, but to make them God-loving, man-loving people, anxious to do the right, eager to welcome every new revelation of truth, suspicious of nothing but evil. So we take no disputatious wranglings or wranglers with us, we go to fight against sin, to labour for holiness, to make men and women more manly and more womanly. Here again we enlist no hostility against us. Such a mission as ours should be heartily welcomed, and its prophets and messengers received with open arms.

3. And then there is a fittingness between this "fallow" religious soil and the truths and principles we have to offer. Many of the new people who crowd into growing communities are unfettered by creeds. They have been brought up outside the churches. No doctrinal catechism has twisted their natures, they have not listened to dogmatic preaching, and been

warped in their judgment by the distorted conceptions of ignorant sectarians; they are ignorant, it is true, but their religious life lies "fallow." In religious matters they are more like children than men and women, and it is easier to begin the religious training of these, and such as these, than to have to commence by undoing what others have done, removing old impressions, breaking through life-long prejudices, and fighting a battle before each truth can be received. There are few theological weeds to uproot, and the soil is not pre-occupied with another crop. We have to begin at the beginning. And so we can lay down the elemental principles of morality and the religious life, giving free scope to every power and faculty, and our work has all the elements in it out of which success can come.

I contend that all these considerations are overwhelming proofs that our opportunity is come. Never was there a time so full of promise; the day which our predecessors have longed for, which they prophesied was not far off, has already dawned. At our very doors the "fallow" land is seen, it is hungry for the seed, it cries aloud for the hand of the husbandman. What a vast field there is before us! There is evil to be destroyed, good to be upbuilded, error to uproot, but so carefully that no good plant shall perish. This Empire never had such a need of an earnest, living religion as now. Theodore Parker says, "All things betoken better times to come. There was never so grand an age as this. How swiftly moves mankind. But how much better can we do? Religious emotion once flowed into the Gothic architecture of Europe—the fairest flower of human art—little blossoms of painting and sculpture, philosophy, eloquence, and poetry, all hidden, and yet kept within this great compound posy of man's history. The Catholic Church has her great composers in stone, artists in speech, and actors in marble; the Protestant its great composers in philosophy and literature, with their melody of thought, their harmony of ideas. One day there must be a Church of Mankind, whose composers of humanity shall think men and women into life, and build with living stones; their painting, their sculpture, their architecture, the manhood of the individual, the virtue of the family and community; their philosophy, their eloquence and song, the happiness of the nation, the peace and goodwill of all the world." The day is coming for these things. Verily the harvest is great.

With this opportunity there comes an imperative duty.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations," is a command as applicable to the present day, and to us, as it was in the distant day of the past and to the disciples to whom it was originally addressed. The obligation has only one condition, namely, discipleship. If in any sense we accept Jesus as our leader and guide, then the duty of obedience to an equal extent immediately follows.

But there are special reasons which press this missionary duty upon us. Others have their call and work, we have ours. The truth committed to our keeping is not for us alone, but to be made known to all. Every thinker gathers his intellectual treasures for the world. A church exists in order that it may announce to all the truth which it contains. The truth committed into our hands has been grossly misrepresented. The perverse ingenuity of our enemies has succeeded in prejudicing the minds of thousands against us. No name has been too bad for us. We are described as being "at the frigid zone of Christianity. All truth as it passes into our hands becomes perverted and false. We give up everything which others hold to be grand and sacred." So are we spoken of. We can bear all this and more. Unpopularity is not pleasant, but it is not intolerable. We are equal to the burden. Our principles are not the less true and lovely because men pervert and sneer at them. And the duty of putting them forth in all their simplicity and native majesty is not the less binding. Duty is not to be neglected because its performance will bring upon us scorn and contumely. The hissing and sneers of men have generally formed the chorus attending the world's great reformers. Had they been faithless, where had been our blessings of to-day? We have entered upon a heritage won for us by their fidelity. Hooting mobs have tried again and again to silence truth, but its voice, though faint and feeble, rises above the roar and babel of falsehood and mingles with the harmonies of the universe. Our truth is opposed to the general notions of men—it is strange to them. Outside our borders are some who have gathered up crumbs from our storehouse, and are offering them to the world as the bread of life. But we have the same bread in greater abundance.

And there is a wondrous need for it. Men are hungering after it, and, whatever the consequences to us, we must give it them lest they die. Our truth is in advance of the world. Men have not yet grown up to grasp it in its fulness. The prophets are stoned, the apostles are slain, the Jesus is crucified. But we have reached a level which the world has yet to attain. We are to call men upwards. Out of darkness into light, out of ignorance into knowledge, out of error into truth, out of sin into holiness. The guide goes before the traveller. If we would lead men we must go before them. Lardner precedes Paley and shows him the way, Norton holds the torch to Colenso, Channing heralds Robertson, Martineau goes before Jowett, and Unitarianism is the vanguard of the Broad Church. Our light is to shine before men that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven. It would be simply traitorous to stand aside now. We have aspired all through our history to be leaders, we have loudly protested against the errors and follies of others, can we hesitate now to unfurl our banner, to sound forth our principles, and to show mankind our truth? Men turn to us and say, "you have broken down our altars, you have dispersed our gods, you have unsettled our faith; we are now afloat on the great waters, we have no haven in sight, no object before us, show us the way!" To turn aside from that appeal would be to take upon ourselves the most awful, the most tremendous responsibility. What must we do? In the past we have had a mission of negations. We have sturdily and unceasingly given emphatic denials to the common teachings of the great Christian organisations. We have denied the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Atonement, of human depravity, of eternal punishment, and have done battle with them on every field. Our iconoclasts have gone out in every direction destroying monstrous doctrines. This was a painful but a necessary work. The ground must be cleared. The wretched and unhealthy structures must be swept away before the nobler buildings can be erected. God sends forth His iconoclasts in various forms—sometimes in great moral rebukers—sometimes in dreadful pestilences—sometimes in scientific laws—sometimes in storm and tempest. But they always precede the great constructors of history. The backwoods-man must shoulder his axe, and cut himself a path through the great forests, and then he must clear the land before he can build his hut and plant his corn. He is the forerunner of civilisation, the pioneer of progress. John the Baptist precedes Jesus. Doubt and denial are the precursors of faith. The false doctrines of Christendom have been battered on every side; they are now jumbled together in the wildest confusion, their ruins lie on every side, the time for the builder has come. These shapeless masses need fitting into the temple of God. Our mission, it seems to me, is that of reconstructors. The work of negation has been done for us; we have to preach the everlasting yea. "Love God," says Carlyle, "this is the everlasting yea, wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works it is well with him." Here, too, is a great truth fitted for us to-day—"Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action. On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service. Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty! Thy second duty will already have become clearer." "Produce, produce! Were it but the pitifullest fraction of a product produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work." This is surely a prophet-call to us. Let us build for the future and for God! All around us the materials lie ready to our hands, the living stones, rough-hewn from the rock of humanity are here, the foundation is laid broad and deep by the wise master-builder, everything conspires to aid us, why should we pause or hold back? To-day is ours. God has given it to us, to-morrow is His, He holds it in his own keeping! Our duty lies very near to us! Yes, the poor and needy are with us and around us, not so much asking for our gold or our charity as for our love, our truth, and our sympathy. The ignorant crowd the great highways; poor in knowledge, mentally naked, they ask spiritual knowledge and clothing from us. The superstitious, who are bowed down in spiritual vassalage, whose souls are in slavery, who look with terror up to the heavens, and in horror towards the infinite beyond the

grave, come cowering towards us, and from their fear-struck eyes we see they want our liberty, our trust, our love. The doubters and deniers, who have been stung into unbelief and goaded into infidelity, gather about us to wonder at and admire our faith combined with our freedom, and ask to be sharers in our joy. The criminal, the drunkard, the outcast, imploringly draw nigh and pour their plaints into our ears. On all sides the victims of an inferior training, and the products of unwholesome dogmas confront us, asking to be led to the higher path. All this is like so much "fallow ground"—ground that we have to break up. There has been a long winter's waiting for tillage. How much can we do? The world awaits us. A truth of religion will make its way into history, not as thunder to destroy, but as sunlight to create and bless. Our truth demands to be proclaimed. The clear voice of duty calls us to the work. Shall we stand idly by and do nothing? Opportunity awaits us now, with beseeching face and open arms; shall we let her appeal in vain? If so, we may hide ourselves in the deep shadows, the golden day is over for us, and comes not back again. We are recreants to duty, and shall go down to the ages with the mark of opprobrium and shame upon us. But we must not let the day pass; now is the accepted time, to-day we can begin to "break up the fallow ground." Shall there be work to do lying near to us, which we can do, and shall it remain undone? Are we willing to let the good seed perish rather than cast it into the ground? Forbid it, O Lord! Let us gather our strength together, unite our scattered forces, and as one man go out to the great field which is before us. Let us "break up our fallow ground." JAMES C. STREET.

Thoughts from Germany.

III.

How is it, one may ask, that Germany, though so much poorer as a nation than England, is able to afford such schools and other public institutions as I have been speaking of in my last two papers? Where does she get her money from? Surely her people must be burdened with a terrible weight of taxation?

As a matter of fact, rates and taxes are considerably lighter than in England—though, of course, that does not mean that they are necessarily light. Germans complain that they are heavy, and what alone keeps them within bounds is the increasing *State wealth*. There is much *public* property in Germany, common property, as distinguished from that of private individuals, and very much more, in proportion, than in England. For example, as I have said, the railways belong to the State, and their revenues go to the Government. Nearly all forest land, and most of the minerals, are State possessions. Taxation, moreover, falls more evenly and generally than with us. We have a landed aristocracy that pays far too little to the nation, and a great body of paupers, or people on the edge of pauperism, who cannot afford to pay anything. Rich England has to maintain, on the one hand, her luxurious and brilliant upper classes, with their House of Lords, their sport and racing, their country mansions and London residences, and, on the other, her helpless and landless poor, with their unions and infirmaries, almshouses and out of door relief. Poor Germany has little of either element. She knows practically neither the squire nor pauper. The munificent charities that are such a predominant feature in England are not common nor greatly needed. The State is able to do what private generosity does here, and there is little of the humiliation and the pauperisation of charity. You do not see the word "Free" written upon schools and libraries, with the implication that these have been *given* to the people, but rather the word "State," or "Town," or "Public," which informs us that having been instituted out of the public purse they are *ipso facto* open to all, and the property of all. There is no trace of the stigma of charity attaching to them. Similarly, compulsory insurance and a wide-spread national scheme of old-age pensions do away with the odium inseparable from our parish relief. There are few things in England so painful to a manly mind as the manner in which, from the poor upwards, we are accustomed to look to those with better clothes, and bigger houses, and heavier purses, for some form or other of assistance, and even to regard them as the lawful objects of a kind of blackmail. In Germany the intercourse and friendship between classes and ranks of life are not tainted by this detestable ingrained attitude of *begging*.

At the same time our *voluntaryism* has its strong points, and some important advantages

in comparison with the State control and direction of the Fatherland. We may see this, I think, particularly in the case of religion.

As you know, Germany, like England, is a Protestant country, and though she contains many more Roman Catholics, her Protestantism is of a more pronounced type generally than ours is. Luther's followers broke away from Rome much as our Puritans did, and there is practically, in Germany, nothing to correspond with our Anglican Church. The Lutherans regard our Establishment—somewhat as the Dissenters do here, more especially of late years—as too close in her creed and ritual to the Roman communion. They have always been more Calvinistic than our Anglicans, simpler,—balder, if you like—in their form of worship, and have laid more stress on the Bible and on preaching. Yet the Lutheran Church is, like the Anglican, a State Church; its ministers receive State pay, and they are bound to certain dogmatic theological tenets —just as our Established clergy are. It is a question whether Luther intended these results—I do not believe he did—but the Church now associated with his name, in his own country, is more or less anti-Roman, a State-established and State-supported communion, and restricted by law to certain definite religious opinions. On the other hand, the theological schools are not to the same extent restricted. The professors at the Universities have a far greater liberty of thought and utterance than the preachers. And the consequence is that while the pulpits are occupied by men, for the most part, of old-fashioned and orthodox views, the students in the class-rooms are instructed in the most advanced and heterodox conclusions.

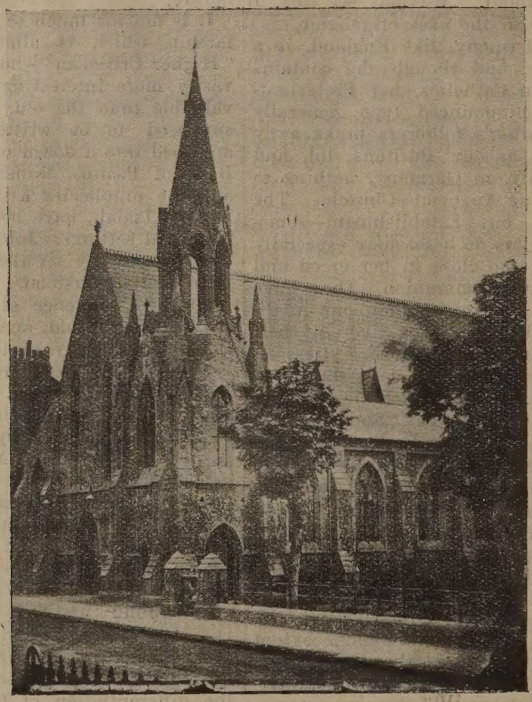
Indeed, at the Universities theology has moved forward with the other sciences, and is regarded as a *science*—that is, as a body of knowledge based on natural law and the universal facts of consciousness, as much subject to discovery and development as astronomy and medicine, and not therefore a fixed set of truths, once and for all imparted to the Church, and never to be added to or changed. The old doctrine of finality in Christian doctrine has been simply pulverised, and a flood of new light has poured in upon the Scriptures, upon the history of Israel, the ministry of Jesus, the rise and development of the Church, the contents of conscience, the roots of worship, and the spiritual and immortal elements in human nature.

It is not too much to say that German scholarship—which is almost identical with our "Higher Criticism"—has given us a *new Bible*, vastly more interesting and impressive and valuable than the old. The Pentateuch, once supposed to be written by Moses, has been analysed into a dozen or more documents; the Book of Psalms, formerly ascribed to David, and the prophecies assigned with equal rashness to Isaiah, have been placed in their true historical settings. Job and the Song of Songs have practically for the first time been translated and understood. An orderly and comprehensive sequence of events has been substituted for the old, anarchical chronology and the entire history of the Hebrew nation has been re-written and re-interpreted. Similar results have followed from a free, scientific study of the writings of the New Testament. It has been proved, up to the hilt, that the gospels attributed to Matthew and Luke are dependent upon that associated with the name of Mark, or an earlier edition of it; that a very considerable amount of legendary matter has entered into the gospel narratives; that the so-called Johannine writings cannot claim more than an indirect connection with the apostle John; and that the Book of Revelation is a Christian revision of a Jewish book of dreams. But of more importance has been the examination of the doctrines of Christianity, the differentiation of the essential from the non-essential, the pursuit of the fundamental down to the very roots of the human mind itself, and the consequent fortifying of the great eternal verities of faith. Superstition, narrowness, superficiality, *Aber-Glaube*, as the Germans say, have suffered from the free and searching play of reason exercised by German scholarship on theological questions; but religion itself has not suffered. On the contrary, the real, important, indispensable truths of Christ, as taught in the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables, have come forth from the ordeal of inquiry and questioning truer than ever—deeper than men knew, more majestic, *diviner*, than could have been supposed.

EDGAR I. FRIPP.

(To be continued.)

No one is perfect : all have their faults.



NEW GRAVEL PIT CHAPEL, HACKNEY.

Our London Churches.

II.—New Gravel Pit, Hackney.

"Oft have I heard the sages say
Truth in a well concealed lay;
In vain I searched the wells about,
But could not find the goddess out;
At last, exerting all my wit,
I found her in a gravel pit!"

The congregation at Hackney can boast a lengthy and illustrious history. Beginning auspiciously with one of the choicest of the Ejected Clergy, they can also point with reflected credit to Matthew Henry, to Price, and to Priestley, in their distinguished line of ministry; founded on rock principles of religious liberty, they have cherished its freedom and handed on its tradition through nearly 250 years of time, and through three chapel buildings in succession.

William Bates, D.D. 1668-1699.

The first chapel was "an old irregular, straggling conventicle, which had been originally formed out of two or three dwelling houses, and which was situated in the main street of the village" (Mare Street). Within its walls preached Dr. William Bates —"Bates of the silver tongue" —the friend of Howe and of Tillotson, the learned Cambridge divine, the King's Chaplain, the popular

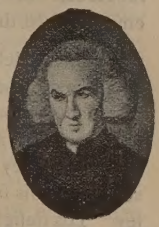
vicar of the rich parish of St. Dunstan's in the West, until the Act of Uniformity proved too much for his conscience, and made him a Dissenter against his wish. Three pages of eloquent eulogy are devoted to him by Calamy, but one short tribute sets him before us most truly, and endears him to our memory. "He had a catholic spirit, and was for an union of all visible Christians, upon moderate principles and practices. He was for having the Church free as Christ hath left it. He vigorously pursued the design of an hearty comprehension, as long as there was any hope: but at last saw there was none until God should give a more suitable spirit to all concerned. His moderation, however, was great to the last, being exceedingly cherished by a firm apprehension that the things wherein only it was possible for good men to differ must be trifles in comparison of the much greater things wherein it was impossible for them not to agree." (I. 102).

Dr. Bates died at the close of the seventeenth century after a thirty years' ministry at Mare Street, Hackney, and was succeeded by the son of another clergyman, Robert Billio, of Wickham, who himself died in 1710.

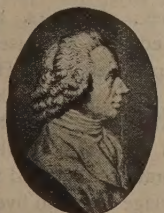
Matthew Henry. 1712-1714.

The next minister was Matthew Henry, but for two years only. He came at the second time of asking, after refusing other invitations to London, and having spent twenty-five years with his Chester congregation. Whilst fulfilling a promise to pay his flock a yearly visit, he died suddenly at Nantwich from apoplexy during his second journey. Matthew Henry's once famous *Commentary* may not be read to-day, but it abounds in quaint and pungent piety; whilst for himself, let one who knew him best pay his tribute. "He had such a savour of religion always upon his spirit, was of such a cheerful temper, so diffusive of all knowledge, so ready in the Scripture, so pat in all his petitions in every emergency, so full and clear in all his performances. He was to me a most desirable friend, and I love Heaven the better since he went thither."

The death of Matthew Henry was followed by a secession of the "unorthodox" portion of the congregation, and the building of a new Chapel in St. Thomas's Square, to be known as the Gravel Pit thereafter. The next fifty-six years cover the services of six ministers, Daniel Mayo, George Smyth, Thomas Mole, Thomas Dawson, M.D., Timothy Laugher, and John Law, but the records of their ministry are scanty. For the next twenty-one years the congregation had the privilege of morning services from Dr. Price. Dr. Price has never received his due. Economist, moralist, mathematician, philosopher, politician, theologian, patriot and friend of freedom, he served his country and humanity in many a noble capacity. But he was more honoured abroad than at home where his sympathy with the French Revolution caused Burke to hotly denounce him as a preacher of sedition and a political divine. But few men have been more useful in their generation, and none more pure, disinterested, and unprejudiced in the candid pursuit of truth and the simple practice of goodness. He was very diffident about his own preaching, and his sermons probably read better than they were delivered.



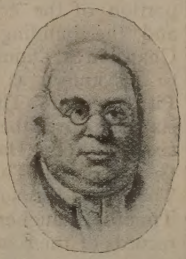
Richard Price, D.D. 1770-1791.



Joseph Priestley, LL.D. 1791-1794.

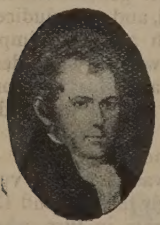
His funeral sermon at Hackney was entrusted very appropriately to his friend Dr. Priestley, who, in turn, when burnt out of Birmingham, was chivalrously, but not unanimously, invited to succeed him. Priestley was happier with his new congregation than with London, and for the latter reason did not stay long. "On the whole, I spent my time more happily at Hackney than ever I had done before, especially from my easy access to Mr. Lindsey, and my frequent intercourse with Mr. Belsham. I found, however, my society much restricted with respect to my philosophical acquaintance, most of the members of the Royal Society shunning me on account of my

religious, or political opinions." So he emigrated to the States to join his sons.



THOMAS BELSHAM. 1794-1805.

Thomas Belsham, who was living close by, and as resident Tutor and Professor of Divinity at the new Hackney Academy, succeeded his friend Priestley. His delight was great, for the Academy was a failure, and had to close its doors. "I thought myself altogether cut off from public services, and on a sudden found myself called to one of the most conspicuous situations among the Protestant Dissenters." He occupied the pulpit at the Old Gravel Pit for eleven years: then came a call to Essex Street Chapel. He was a voluminous writer on theology and the Boanerges of Unitarian controversy.



ROBERT ASPLAND. 1805-1845.

Robert Aspland accepted the pulpit after five years in the Isle of Wight. What a change to forty crowded years in the metropolis, and in most exciting times for Dissenters! Space altogether fails to record his ceaseless activities as preacher, editor, organiser, and general leader. He originated and edited the *Monthly Repository*, and the *Christian Reformer*, assisted in procuring the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and in securing the Dissenters' Marriage Act, and lived to see the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. Four years after his settlement, the congregation received notice to quit the Old Gravel Pit, and erected a new building on the present site; it was opened on November 4th, 1809. He preached his last sermon on February 4th, 1844.

ROBERT BROOK ASPLAND. 1858-1869.

After an interval of two years, the Rev. John Boucher was minister, from 1847 to 1852. Then the Rev. T. L. Marshall ministered from 1853 to 1857. He is now living in retirement at Sidmouth. A third Gravel Pit Chapel was opened by the Rev. Thomas Madge, on the 25th March, 1858, the previous one being pronounced insecure, and the Rev. Robert Brook Aspland, eldest son of the former minister, was appointed minister in the same year. He edited the *Christian Reformer* in succession to his father, and enriched its pages with his priceless lore of Puritan biography and literature. He was one of the secretaries of Manchester College, and also of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Suddenly dying on the 21st June, 1869, he was followed by the Rev. J. T. Whitehead, who served twenty-one years, and thence by the Rev S. Fletcher Williams. The Rev. R. H. W. Bloor who settled in 1899, has just sent in his resignation, having accepted an invitation to Reading.

The Provincial Assembly of London and the South Eastern Counties held its Ninth Annual Meeting at Hackney, on October 26th, 1897, the Rev. W. C Bowie preaching in the morning, and Dr. Brooke Herford presiding at the evening meeting. FRANK K. FREESTON.

Notes and Jottings.

For Christian people one of the most significant events of the past month has been the vote of the House of Commons upon the subject of the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal. The Government has, for the time being, gained its point, but with a reduced majority. We are glad to see that another opportunity of discussing the question will arise when the labour ordinances are laid on the table of the House. The whole social future of South Africa is involved, and we are not less concerned for the corrupting influence of a semi-servile population upon English settlers than for the people, whom we intend to

import upon conditions which have not existed under the British flag since the abolition of slavery. The defence of the policy was based entirely upon economic grounds, and the wider moral and social issues urged by several speakers fell upon deaf ears. The whole transaction marks another step in the steady and alarming aggression of finance upon morality in English politics, and a complete change of attitude on the part of the House of Commons towards those whom, with some pride of phrase, we call the "inferior races."

Sixpenny books have evidently come to stay, at any rate for a season. A vigorous propaganda is being carried on under the auspices of the Rationalist Press Association with this form of cheap literature. On a recent visit to a Sunday afternoon meeting of the Ethical Society in one of our large cities we were struck by the variety of books, many of them of a critical and ultra-rationalistic type, which can be bought at this price. The meeting in question was attended by about two hundred men, many of these leaders of organized labour, and it was only typical of what is going on elsewhere. These men, for one reason or another, are not to be drawn into the churches, but they are alive to the importance of the religious question. Those who wish to help them, or to place other aspects of religious thought before them, must embark upon the sixpenny line, and get their books on the bookstalls, and into the smaller bookshops, where the right people will see them. There are thousands of men who can be reached by literature who never listen to sermons because they never go to hear them.

A suggestion was made recently in the *Inquirer* that Mr. Armstrong's "God and the Soul" should be issued in this way. There are other books which might be mentioned, such as a selection of Martineau's sermons; but, unfortunately, we are not strong in apologetic and expository literature, which is at once simple and popular. Popular it must be, if it is to be read, and full of positive conviction without the note of defence in the face of orthodoxy which weakens so much of our writing and gives it an air of negation. A sixpenny book on the character and teaching of Christ, written simply as history, in which the religious attitude was conveyed by spirit and tone rather than by direct doctrinal statement, might do great service at the present time. But we want the man with a living pen, and the courage to be popular.

We have no wish to convert all our readers to sixpenny editions, so we hasten to call attention to Dr. Drummond's book on the Gospel according to St. John. Parts of it are no doubt for scholars, but there are large sections, which everybody who is interested in literature of the New Testament, should read. It has received a warm welcome already in many quarters. But why should there be some crowing over the fact that a Unitarian has written a book which sums up in favour of the Johannine authorship? The question is not a matter of orthodoxy or heterodoxy, but simply of evidence and trained historical judgment. When will the world realize that it is possible for some men, they are still alas! too few, to write impartially upon religious subjects, and to attend only to the evidence and the facts. Another book which we are glad to mention is the delightful sketch of Jeremy Taylor, the English St. Chrysostom, which Mr. Gosse has written for the "English Men of Letters." A more delightful companion for a railway journey or the slippered ease of a March evening we could hardly desire.

Travel Impressions.

By the Editor.

VIII.

A CONTRAST.

To pass straight from America to Italy is to experience a sense of contrast which would be violent were it not piquant and interesting. The one is the land of the new, the other the land of the old. Almost the whole attraction of Italy is in its past and its relics, whereas America has no past to speak of. The story of many an Italian city runs back for 2500 years, while nothing in America has a pedigree of 300 years. The charm of Italy is in its treasures of art, and American art is yet to

seek. Not a street, square, palace, or church in these ancient towns but has its associations of romance or tragedy, of high festival or bloody feud. As we tread their stones we travel back through the centuries and live again with the Sforzas, the Visconti, the Medici; with Dante, Savonarola, St. Francis; with Giotto, Raphael, and Luini. An old-world civilisation, with its problems, quarrels, splendours and squalors, but, above all, with its wondrous art-development, takes us captive. And the contrast between all that and life in American cities is so vivid that it strikes an observer almost as with a blow. Not that life in America is at all deficient in absorbing interests, only they are of a wholly different kind. There men are face to face with all the problems—social, economic, industrial, political, racial, etc.—of a new civilisation, working out with amazing vigour, yet often as it would seem quite blindly, its own destinies. America looks forward with eager eyes and hopes to the future; Italy looks back with satisfied pride upon the past.

In a previous letter I mentioned that the guide-books to such typical American cities as Chicago, Buffalo, and St. Louis contain no lists of churches as among the notable things to be visited. In Italy it is just the reverse. Even here, in the thriving city of Milan, the chief financial centre of Italy, with its great silk firms, its wealthy manufactories, its tempting shops, its splendid service of electric trams, and its many up-to-date conveniences, everything radiates from the Cathedral, and its churches are its chief feature of attraction. They, with their tombs, frescoes, and artistic treasures are the monuments by which we read the history of the past. They tell us of the great families who ruled, of the artists who adorned, and the craftsmen who built, of the crimes and disasters that befell the great Lombardy capital. To know Milan you must know its churches. There is *San Lorenzo*, a church of the fourth century, with its tomb of Ataulphus, King of the Goths, brother-in-law and successor to Alaric: there is *San Eustorgio*, which for hundreds of years held the chief treasure of Milan, the bones of the Three Kings, presented by Constantine in A.D. 300, and now in Cologne Cathedral: there is *San Ambrogio*, founded by Ambrose himself when Bishop of Milan, where behind the high altar you may sit in a stone chair in which the great prelate sat. Here St. Ambrose baptised St. Augustine, and here they preserve relics of the doors which Ambrose closed in the face of the Emperor Theodosius in 389, after the cruel massacre of Thessalonica; and here in the crypt is the body of the saint. Nor must you omit the church of *Sta. Maria della Grazie*, with its Refectory, where is seen all that remains of Da Vinci's "Cenacolo" (the Last Supper), nor the church of *San Maurizio*, with its frescoes by Luini, and half-a-dozen other and equally interesting churches.

Last, but not least, there is the great Duomo, the noble Cathedral, built of white marble, one of the three or four most magnificent churches of the world. Its history is bound up with the history of one of Milan's great ruling families, the Visconti, and it well illustrates what went on all over North Italy from the 12th to the 15th centuries, the building and adorning of churches by wealthy rulers and families. They vied with each other in gathering together the best architects, painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, iron-workers, and artists in Mosaic, to enrich the towns they governed and to make splendid their churches. Perhaps never again will the church be the centre of a nation's artistic life, the recipient of a nation's gifts, the centre of a nation's vitality as in those centuries. It does not follow that this means the decay of real religion. For my own part I believe that never before in the history of Christendom has religion, by which I mean the invisible things of Righteousness, Love, and Peace, had so strong a hold on the minds and hearts of men. And in this respect the contrast of which I have been speaking seems all in favour of America. But religion is one thing, and that organised institution called the church another. To-day the devotion, generosity, conscience, humanity and æsthetic sensibilities of men find expression in other ways than by the building of Cathedrals and the founding of Abbeys. Moreover, Protestantism seems quite unable to give itself adequate and original artistic manifestation. It has never inspired artistic genius as the church once inspired Fra Angelico, Giotto, Luini, and Michael Angelo. We have lately been told that what religion wants, Protestant Liberal religion especially, in order to overcome the indifference of laymen to worship, is the glory of form, colour, and material. It may be questioned, however, much as the wor-

ship in Liberal churches needs enriching by art and music and ritual and symbolism, whether history at all confirms the idea that religion has ever gained much by its alliance with art. There is a well-known chapter by Mr. A. J. Symonds on Italian art, in which, after discussing the influence of religion on art and of art on religion, he reluctantly draws the conclusion that the things of the spirit tend to become materialised by their constant association with form, colour, and artistic expression. So it need not be altogether a matter for regret that Protestantism is unable to vie with the lavish and outward beauty in which Romanism once lived and moved and had its being. America may take comfort after all!

Another thing to be remembered and rejoiced over is the purified moral ideal of modern life, which makes it impossible for a man to feel that he can expiate a shameful crime by adorning an altar with precious stones, or atone for a murder by building a church. Ruskin somewhere complains that the modern Judas has not grace enough to go out and hang himself, and it may be argued that the modern man of ill-gotten wealth has not conscience enough to desire to make atonement for his sins. Still, it is to the good that the gross superstition of that kind of atonement should have come to an end. Here is the origin of one of the loveliest churches in Italy—the Certosa of Pavia—a church filled with the costliest treasures of art and artistic workmanship, a very dream of beauty.* I have already mentioned the Visconti, one of the great ruling Milanese families. Now, the Certosa of Pavia was founded in 1396 by Gian Galeazzo Visconti as an atonement for the imprisonment and murder of his uncle, Barnabo Visconti. Barnabo was the ruler of Milan, while Gian reigned in Pavia. By the imprisonment of his uncle and his subsequent secret murder Gian made himself master of Milan, and obtained from the Emperor the title of duke. But here the church intervened with threats of excommunication, and demanded some adequate act of atonement for so atrocious a crime. Gian thereupon founded this church and determined that it should be as sumptuous as art and money could make it. He himself, although a murdering villain, had the true artistic instinct. It was he who founded the Milan Cathedral, setting apart a quarry of white marble for that purpose. In some respects the Certosa of Pavia is a still more wonderful triumph of art. Yet we may be thankful that no church would to-day accept the offering of a building, however beautiful and costly, given from such a motive, the foundation stones of it red with human blood.

Milan, January 30th, 1904.

* This magnificent church, together with the monastery to which it is attached, is now a public monument, under the care of the government.

Cremation and the Birmingham Crematorium.

II.

Here it is desirable to call attention to a fact which is not generally known and realised, but which has an important bearing on this subject, namely, the present very defective system in England for ascertaining and registering the cause of death in cases of earth burial. Sir Henry Thompson writes as follows:—

"The method hitherto and still adopted is to obtain a written certificate from the medical man who personally attended the deceased. No doubt this system produces a satisfactory result in the majority of cases. But in many, where no doctor has been present and evidence is most needed, no provision for any medical examination is made, *and registration is accepted without it,* unless some obviously suspicious circumstances become known to someone, who may demand a Coroner's enquiry." And again. "From the Registrar-General's Report for 1890 it is clear that about one death in every 36 was registered *without any certificate,* and that one in every 24 certificates *was without value.* It must be added that uncertified deaths were far more numerous in Scotland.

"In 1896 were registered for England and Wales 526,727 deaths. Of this total were buried *without any certificate* about 12,000 deaths, and respecting which *nothing whatever was known as to the cause of death.*"

In view of these facts, and the representations of the Cremation Society, the Government appointed a Select Committee of the House of Commons "to enquire into the sufficiency of the existing law as to the disposal of the dead." Sir Walter Foster, of the Local Government Board, was the President. The Committee reported unanimously in 1893, and their report

was published in a Blue Book. Amongst the conclusions arrived at, and referring to earth burial, were the following:—

"So far as affording a record of the true cause of death, and the detection of it in cases where death may have been due to violence, poison, or where criminal neglect is concerned, the class of certified deaths leaves much to be desired."

Certification is extremely important as a deterrent of crime, and numerous proofs are given at length in support of the statement. "Contrast this class with that of uncertified deaths, where the result is such as to force upon your Committee the conviction that vastly more deaths occur annually from foul play and criminal neglect than the law recognises."

It is stated that the opportunity for perpetrating crime is great in the considerable class of uncertified cases, "in short, the existing procedure plays into the hands of the criminal classes. The Committee are much impressed with the serious possibilities implied in a system which permits death and burial to take place without the production of satisfactory medical evidence of the cause of death."

As regards *cremation*, the Committee reported as follows:—"Your Committee are of opinion that with the precautions adopted in connection with cremation, as carried out by the Cremation Society, there is little probability that cases of crime would escape detection, but inasmuch as these precautions are purely voluntary, your Committee consider that, in the interests of public safety, such regulations should be enforced by law."

The rules and orders of the Home Secretary, made in pursuance of the Cremation Act, 1902, fully carry out the above recommendations of the Select Committee, they affect all crematoria, and will be referred to at greater length hereafter.

The first cremation at Woking took place in the year 1885, and two more followed in the same year.

The publicity thus given, and the admirable way in which the cremation was carried out, attracted the attention of the public, and year by year a steadily increasing number of bodies were so disposed of at Woking, until during the year 1900 it reached 301, with a total to that time of 1824. Amongst those most interested in the erection of the Woking Crematorium, and a liberal and consistent contributor and supporter, was the Duke of Bedford, who also constructed a crematorium at his own expense for himself and his family, in which he was cremated in 1891. Other large towns soon became alive to the importance of the subject, and in 1892 a crematorium, satisfactory in all its appointments, was erected at Manchester, and was opened by the Duke of Westminster. Since that time a large number of bodies have been cremated there. Two years later Glasgow provided itself with a crematorium, which was built in the Maryhill Cemetery, and was opened in 1894 by Sir Charles Cameron, Bart., M.P.

In September, 1896, a well-arranged, well-appointed, and handsome crematorium was built adjoining the Anfield Cemetery, in the suburbs of Liverpool, which was opened by Lord Derby, as Lord Mayor, and here 222 bodies have been cremated.

The first Municipal Crematorium was erected at Hull under special powers granted by Parliament, under the supervision of Mr. Henry Simon, the able engineer, so well-known, of Manchester.

It will be seen, therefore, that Birmingham has not been true to its motto, "Forward," as regards cremation. It was not until the year 1898 that any steps were taken to supply what was becoming felt to be a serious and growing want in the Midland Counties, in order to avoid the necessity of putting the relatives who desired cremation to the serious inconvenience and expense of taking the remains either to Woking, Manchester, or Liverpool.

In that year a preliminary meeting of a few gentlemen was held in Birmingham, when an executive committee was appointed, which obtained general information and sent a deputation to visit the Crematoria at Glasgow and Manchester. From the large number of influential supporters who joined the general committee, it soon became evident that the movement would succeed.

A public meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the Council House in Birmingham on the 14th June, 1899, when Mr. G. J. Johnson presided. On the motion of the Bishop of Coventry (now Bishop of Manchester), seconded by Sir Charles Cameron, it was resolved unanimously—"That a crematorium be erected for Birmingham and the neighbourhood." A limited company was at once formed, to which a considerable amount of public support was given. The directors were fortunately able to

secure a good site on the main road from Birmingham to Walsall, and opposite to Lieut.-General Calthorpe's park and residence. It is 3½ miles from the centre of Birmingham, and 15 minutes' walk from Perry Barr Railway Station (L. and N.-W.R.), and also from the terminus of the tramway from Corporation Street, Birmingham. Upon this land a suitable building has been erected, consisting of a handsome chapel, with crematorium in the rear, which stand in the centre of the land, and are approached by means of a drive from the road through handsome gates. At the entrance is an ornamental lodge, which contains the business office.

The opening ceremony took place on the 7th of October, 1903, in the presence of a large number of supporters, and was performed by Sir Henry Thompson, who, notwithstanding his great age, was good enough to come down from London especially for the purpose.

Many letters of apology for non-attendance were received, amongst them from the Bishops of Lichfield, Worcester, and Coventry, and from Principal Lodge. These are important, as showing the growing feeling on the subject of cremation during the last few years, and the importance of adopting the system. No apology, therefore, is needed for recording the views expressed, which will no doubt carry great weight.

The Bishop of Lichfield wrote: — "I am in sympathy with those who see the necessity of adopting some such method for disposing of the bodies of the departed, on sanitary and utilitarian grounds, and I see nothing in it which should reasonably give offence to those who hold the Christian faith."

The Bishop of Worcester wrote: — "What I should desire when I myself die is that my body should be reduced rapidly to ashes, so that it may do no harm to the living; and, again, I do not see that there is any serious Christian argument against such a practice, and from a sanitary point of view it has enormous advantages."

The Bishop of Coventry (now Bishop of Manchester) wrote:—"I am quite sure that, in spite of strong sentimental objections, very naturally entertained, we shall come to see that under the conditions of modern life cremation is not only preferable from the sanitary point of view, but that it is also the most reverent and decent treatment of the bodies of the dead, and one that is in entire accordance with Christian belief."

Principal Sir Oliver Lodge wrote:—"I congratulate those who have worked for it, on the consummation of their scheme, and to emphasise the desirability, especially in the neighbourhood of large towns, of thus providing a means of disposing of our bodies in such a way that their organic particles shall be promptly and cleanly returned to the atmosphere whence they were derived with a minimum of inconvenience and offence to the living."

CHARLES HARDING.

(To be continued).

The Form of Public Worship.

(Continued.)

Not, indeed, that the hymn should be excluded. It has its own expressive powers, even though it lacks the stateliness and elasticity of the chanted psalm. The inclusion of the canticle confers a new value upon the hymn; the use of both in the same service affords that unity in variety which seems to be an essential principle of beauty. This is especially true of those fine hymns which are paraphrases of psalms, and depend for much of their effect on a knowledge of their original. They have the same charm as a neat translation of a piece of English verse into Latin elegiacs or sapphics. Such are, for instance, "The spacious firmament on high" and "The Lord my pasture shall prepare." On the other hand, many of the most beautiful poems in hymn form are better fitted for private or familiar devotion than for use in public worship.

The canticle has yet another advantage over the hymn, which calls for passing notice. As it can easily be used by way of responsive recitation, and is independent of the presence of organ, precentor, or choir, it is a mode of praise peculiarly suited to occasional and week-day services.

But a true judgment between canticle and hymn must regard them not merely as literary, but rather as musical, products. The length of the recurrent cycle in hymn stanzas makes it hard for hymn-tunes to steer between Scylla and Charybdis, between the jejune and the cloying. To aid the memory, and allow the first few verses to be sung with pleasure, the tune must "go with a swing:" and such a tune very soon

begets weariness and distaste. Hence arises the convention which limits the hymn—whatever the length of the verse—to a certain small number of verses. Let us recognise the genius with which some chorale-makers have rebutted this dilemma. Its horns are nevertheless too formidable for most composers.

Now, the cause of this inconvenience is that through all the verses of the hymn both metre and tune remain unchanged. With the chant it is otherwise. No one verse repeats (except rarely, and by accident) the exact metre and musical time of any other. The mutual interplay of words and music,—the "pointing," as it is called, and consequent variation in the length of the chief tone,—give us our "unity in variety" in a very happy and unforced manner. At the same time, the melody of the leading part may be both simple and sweet without grave risk, the same canticle may with advantage (instead of detriment, as in the case of the hymn) be set from time to time to different chants, and a change of chant may be made, and often is made, in the course of one and the same canticle.

In the actual construction of a liturgy, the following rules seem to be sound.

(1.) Have a fixed order. This is to avoid distraction and nervous waste. It is the application to our present subject-matter of the well-accepted principle of routine. An order which may serve as a norm has already been evolved.

(2.) Provide for each part an abundance of alternative material. This will not preclude the use of one invariable psalm or prayer, such as the *Venite* or the *Paternoster*, at a fixed place in the order. The same reasons, however, which have already led us to admit extempore prayer will also, if logically applied, lead us to provide for the greatest possible variety of expression in liturgical prayer, and in other fixed forms of devotion. And this can only be achieved by an apparatus of alternatives. Catholic tradition, it is true, is apparently against us. But the Catholic order took form before the invention either of printing or of paper, and was intended to be learned by rote. All those parts of the service to which this consideration did not apply, as the gospel and epistle in the Communion Service, which were to be read from a manuscript, were provided in abundant variety. Advantage was taken of the necessity for a calendar, which should prescribe the proper portions, to add a special collect for each holy day. We are no longer constrained by the old limits, and may well carry further the principle which, even despite the constraint, succeeded in declaring itself. Not that we, ourselves, are quite free from constraint. There are certain physical difficulties which must be faced. If our array of pieces, from which only one is to be chosen, be printed altogether in a long chain, we shall be disturbed by the seeking of places and turning of leaves. If we allot each of them to a separate form of service, so that each service differs in all its suitable parts from every other, we shall lose the elasticity which we have been trying to secure. A service, once chosen, will become as binding on minister and congregation as if there were but one in the prayer book. The best plan seems to be a compromise between these two. We shall break up our material into several orders of service, each with its own devotional note, and we shall provide for each of these services as large a choice in its separate parts as we find physically convenient.

In the selection of hymns we are so hampered by circumstances—such as the small number of very good hymns, the tradition of our meeting-houses, the exigencies of the tune book,—that it is impossible to apply strictly the ideal laws. These are: (1) hymns in public worship must be expressive of feeling and intention, not of opinion; (2) of common, not singular emotion: for they are the utterance of a congregation, not of a single soul; (3) they should accord with the general tone of the whole service; (4) if possible, for the sake of the weaker brethren, they should have at least some faint flavour of literary grace.

The first of these rules may be taken as self-evident, and the last must, with a sigh, be left to expound itself. The second rule is clearly right, as a rule, but it may nevertheless admit of exceptions. Help has often come to some poor lonely sinner or sufferer through the words of a hymn which, though intensely personal in its tone, was learnt in congregational singing. Such hymns as "Abide with me," "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and even "Lead, kindly light," have won their way, no doubt for the reason

given, into the use of the Church. They usually come at the close of evening service, like a parting gift of good memory from all to each, and it would be a harsh pedantry to condemn them. But as a rule the rule stands. The third law is sometimes contravened on grounds which have been stated thus: "A poor man comes in need of a word of hope; my sermon happens rather to convey a solemn warning. If the hymns accord with the sermon, he goes away unsatisfied. Or another may need restraint, when my discourse makes altogether for encouragement; let me deal with his case in a well-chosen hymn." The reply is obvious. Is there no prayer in the service? Is there any sincere prayer that does not minister both to joy and to self-control? And does any sermon aim at raising high spirits, without regard to conscience and duty? or does a preacher ever intend (no matter what he actually achieves,) to depress his hearers to a point of despair? In any case a programme of spiritual scraps, carefully variegated to suit divers cravings, can never be an order of common worship.

E. W. LUMMIS.

(*To be concluded*).

Guild News.

LONDON GUILDS' UNION.—The first annual meeting of this Union was held by special invitation at Stratford on Wednesday evening, Feb. 17th. The evening's proceedings commenced with a pleasant half-hour's social talk in the school-room adjoining the church, light refreshments were served, and the time quickly passed in the exchange of greetings between those, who although living in the same great metropolis of London, are yet divided by a considerable distance and rarely have an opportunity of meeting. The company then assembled in the chapel and joined in one of the special Guild services. After a Bible lesson had been read, the business meeting was held, Rev. F. K. Freeston, the President, taking the chair. Rev. John Ellis, the Secretary, read a report of the year's work, and recalled the fact that the London Union was just a year old, and had been inaugurated in February of last year by a very successful gathering at Essex Church, Kensington, when a vigorous and impressive address had been delivered by the Rev. Joseph Wood, of Birmingham. Since then two other meetings had been held—one in the summer at Highgate, and one in the autumn at Mansford Street. The Treasurer's report was read, and showed a balance in hand of £1. The election of officers followed. It was with much regret that the members heard that, through pressure of work, Mr. Ellis was obliged to give up the duties of Secretary. Rev. W. H. Rose, of Walthamstow, was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy. Mr. Edgar Noel was re-elected Treasurer, and Mr. Alfred Thompson, of Mansford Street, Vice-President, for the ensuing year. Mr. Freeston moved from the chair that, as Mr. Ellis had felt compelled by pressure of work to relinquish the office of Secretary, he be invited to fill the less onerous post of President. The proposition was heartily seconded, and carried unanimously. A motion was put that it would be very gratifying to the members if Rev. F. K. Freeston, who had been such an able and genial President during the past year, would consent to become one of their Vice-Presidents. This motion was unanimously carried, and Mr. Freeston consented to act in that capacity. The meeting concluded with a lecture, illustrated by lantern slides, on "Dr. Priestley: A Centenary Celebration."

LONDON: *Mansford Street.*—This Guild has been active during the last few weeks in the practical side of their work, *i.e.*, service for others. A special meeting was held in the large school-room attached to this mission for the purpose of giving a happy evening to some of the blind people living in the East End of London. Tea and an entertainment were provided, about 100 of the afflicted sharing them with as many guides. After tea came a little neighbourly gossip and a re-arrangement of the seats, followed by a brief welcome from the Warden, Mr. Ellis, and a few happily-chosen words of gratitude and good-fellowship from Mr. Mead, their teacher and missionary. The first part of the entertainment consisted of songs, recitations, and readings. The second half included the children's play, "The Babes in the Wood," acted by scholars of the Sunday School. It is interesting to know that the blind folks easily followed the play and considered that they *saw* it. There had been some misgivings about the suitability of such a form of amusement, but the reception of the piece throughout left no doubt as to the genuine pleasure given by the juvenile actors. The visitors were also invited to join in one or two popular choruses, which they did with evident enjoyment. At the conclusion, Mr. Plumbridge, a visitor of the blind, thanked the Mansford friends, and particularly the children, for all they had done.

Next month we hope to have some news from some of our provincial Guilds. Secretaries and others kindly communicate with Miss Tremain, 57, Cromwell Avenue, Highgate, London, not later than first week in March for April issue.

"In the union of mysticism with freedom of thought and inquiry will, I am persuaded, be found the faith of the future."—JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

News from the Field.

Still, and indeed as ever, the changes in our ministry go on. Resignations are announced of *Rev. A. J. Innes* (of *Kilmarnock*), of *Rev. H. K White* (of *Urmston*), and of *Rev. D. Davis* (of *Blackpool*). We shall be glad to hear of all these men being busy at new posts of work at an early day.

Then we have appointments made by the congregations at *Pontypridd* and *Newhall Hill* The services of *Mr. S. Jones, B.A.* (of the *Home Missionary College*), have been secured for *Pontypridd*, and are likely to prove very useful. The congregation of *Newhall Hill, Birmingham*, after the long and attractive ministry of *Rev. A. A. Charlesworth*, whose services in the Midlands will be greatly missed, have appointed *Mr. Thomas Paxton*, who was one of the lay preachers in the North of England, and for a while minister-in-charge of *Unity Church, South Shields*.

Welcomes have been offered in a very pleasing way to *Rev. W. J. Jupp*, at *Croydon*, and to *Rev. H. Rylett*, at *Tenterden*.

During the past month presentations have been made to the *Rev. G. Heaviside* (of *Coventry*), a purse of gold ; to *Rev J. E. Manning*, from the *Old Meeting, Birmingham*, an address thanking him for his services as *locum tenens* for *Mr Wood* during his absence in search of health ; to *Mrs. Myers* (of *Shrewsbury*), a fine dressing bag and appointments—on laying down her post as superintendent of the Sunday School—a post which she has filled with honour and success for thirty years ; and a timepiece and one hundred guineas to *Rev. E. Allen*, on the close of his long and useful ministry at *Walmsley*. All these are pleasing proofs of appreciation of faithful work well done.

The *Rev. J. E Carpenter* is untiring in his good work. He has been lecturing at *Brussels*, in French, to a group of scholars and thinkers from the University, and to members of *M. Hocart's* congregation, and delivering courses of lectures in *Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Manchester*, and other places. He is spending himself in this work, which cannot but be of the highest service to hundreds of inquiring minds.

The *Priestley* Centenary is being celebrated in various parts of the country—at *Warrington, Leeds*, and *Birmingham*. At the latter place the celebrations will be continued throughout the year, and the *Midland Christian Union* hope to raise the sum of £5000 to enable them to continue his good work.

Public lectures on behalf of our religious principles and truths have been delivered during the month in many of our churches, and some of a special nature at *Longsight* in *Manchester*, and in the *Town Hall* at *Newcastle-on-Tyne*. The attendances are encouraging, and the enthusiasm rises.

The *Manchester Association* is continuing its good work of visiting the churches. Since our last issue *Longsight* and *Bradford* have been visited, and in each case with encouraging results. Work like this should go on throughout the country.

We note, with pleasure, the opening of the new Iron Church at *St. Helen's*. One fresh church every month would be a splendid record for us.

Our *London* friends are bestirring themselves. The new younger ministers are evidently alive, and they are aided by those who have long been in the work of the ministry. We read of the establishment of a Choral Society, a Layman's Club, Conferences on Postal Missions, and other activities. All this is good.

We see that Sunday Evening Services are recommenced at *Cambridge*, under what appear to be favourable circumstances. The time has come for a permanent effort there. We need a building, and a vigorous accomplished man who will make the work there the work of his life.

The reports from *Ireland* are not inspiring. When was a new cause called into existence there? Is there no missionary spirit left? Nearly all our churches there came out of the orthodox synods and Presbyteries,—but what have our synods and Presbyteries done? Oh for the breath of a new life!

The *National Conference Committee* have sent out a well-written address or pastoral on "Public Worship" to all our Ministers and Churches. To what use this will be turned among our free men and churches it would be hard to say. But the address certainly is worth considering.

The directors of the *Sustentation Fund* are crying out for help. Their resources are not equal to the demands made upon them. They have to diminish grants where they ought rather to be increased, and they have to refuse grants where they are sorely needed. Where are our Carnegies?

Mr. Armstrong has done good work in bringing to book the *Bishop of Liverpool*, who has been speaking of the "darkness of Unitarianism." The Bishop's explanation, courteous and gentlemanly, leaves him in the position of at least suggesting that grapes may be gathered from thorns and figs from thistles. Evidently darkness, accordinng to him, brings forth some very excellent fruitage.

The *Brahno Somaj* have been celebrating their 74th anniversary in *London*. The occasion was full of interest. It records one of the most suggestive movements of a spiritual nature in connection with Hindooism. It would be useful to us if we could really know what progress, if any, is being made in India itself in connection with this spiritual upheaving. So many causes in these later days flourish for a time, and then pass away. Is this one of them? or is there a living spirit within it which promises to bring forth fruit unto everlasting life?

Again, we have to tell of the passing-away of good men from among us. On our roll of life and honour we now inscribe the names of *Mr. W. C. Jolly, J.P.*, of *Hampstead*, late of *Bath;* of *Mr. R. Holt*, of *Newchurch;* of *Mr. T. Dodgeon*, of *Padiham;* and of *Mr. E. J. Harry*, one time minister of *Chelmsford*. Of them all we may say—so far as our judgment goes—"Well done, good and faithful servants." SCRUTATOR.

February 15th, 1904.

The Midland Educational Company, Limited, Birmingham.

Priestley Centenary Celebration.

£5000

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J. P. P. DUTFIELD, Prudential Buildings, Corporation Street, Birmingham.

E. ELLIS TOWNLEY, 88, Colmore Row, Birmingham.